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SUBJECT: JORDAN: HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY 2004-2005

REF: 04 STATE 267453

1. Post is providing the following report as requested in reftel.

Human Rights Strategy 2004-2005

2. The Government of Jordan's respect for human rights remained satisfactory during the year. A human rights commission established by King Abdullah in 2003 continues to expand its activities and has taken an active role in public discussions. The King charged the new Government appointed in October 2004 to focus on administrative reforms in order to provide a bureaucratic environment better equipped to advance human rights. While the Government continues to publicly promote social and political reform, there is still a lack of progress in many areas. Members of the security forces sometimes act with impunity, and there are still restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association. While citizens participated in the political process through their elected representatives to Parliament, they did not have the right to change their government. Societal discrimination against and restrictions on the rights of women continued to be problems.

3. The U.S. human rights and democracy strategy promotes the rule of law and legal reform, civil society development, civic participation in the political process and women's rights. The United States did this through direct dialogue with the Jordanian Government at all levels, as well as programs, training and the publication of reports on human rights, labor, and religious freedom.

4. The United States advanced its strategy by building on Jordanian government initiatives to strengthen human rights. Post continues to work with the quasi-independent National Center for Human Rights and the Human Rights Directorate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A grant from the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor provided training on international human rights law and practice to Directorate officials as well as to members of the Ministries of Education, Justice, and Interior. Members of the police, military and the National Center for Human Rights were also included. Most of the professional military education provided in the United States to Jordanian personnel included a human rights component.

5. The U.S. Agency for International Development continues to support public sector reform efforts in Jordan. In the area of rule of law, two new programs were launched in 2004 to assist the Ministry of Justice to implement its reform strategy, which was developed last year with U.S. support. Programming includes the development of a judicial code of conduct, complete with implementation mechanisms; support for alternative dispute resolution, in order to reduce the courts' workload; automation of the country's case management system, which has greatly improved efficiency and transparency; human resources capacity building at the Ministry and courts; and a comprehensive program to establish the Judicial Institute of Jordan as a regional leader in judicial education. The overall goals of the programs are to assist Jordan to achieve its stated desire for greater social and political reform through increased citizen participation. In the coming year, additional U.S. assistance will include programs that strengthen the legislative process, assist civil society to become a stakeholder in reform, and programs to support a free, independent and professional local media sector.

6. U.S. exchange programs for judges and judicial personnel have focused on helping Jordan reform its trial and pre-trial procedures for a more prompt and fair delivery of justice. The exchange programs included bringing Jordanian judges to the United States, where they observed U.S. courts and were provided with training. Follow-on activities will continue in Jordan. Post also funded a regional conference of women lawyers and judges to promote women's rights through more effective representation in the judiciary.

7. The United States promoted broader participation in the political process, particularly among women. In July, 11 members of parliament and two parliament staffers visited the United States on a program focusing on the role of legislators in the democratic process. Post executed a grant

agreement with a local non-governmental organization to provide a series of workshops on enhancing the performance of female members of parliament and women leaders. Through the Middle East Partnership Initiative the United States has funded a Freedom House campaign against family violence. The campaign has included awareness-raising workshops held in universities and local communities throughout Jordan. In December, post commemorated the anniversary of signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by hosting a panel discussion of women activists on the issue of gender violence in Jordan. The event was well attended and received positive press coverage.

18. The United States sought to promote media independence and professionalism through a conference on press freedom held in April. The objective of the conference, organized by the Committee for the Defense of the Freedom of Journalists, was to inform members of parliament and government officials about the concerns of journalists regarding their rights and responsibilities. In June the Embassy held a conference on women in the media that promoted public awareness of women's rights.

19. The United States tracked and reported on religious freedom cases, and U.S. officials discussed individual cases with Jordanian counterparts at the highest levels. The United State hosted four members of the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center to participate in an international visitor program on religious tolerance.

10. All assistance under the U.S. Agency for International Development's diverse program portfolio integrated the crosscutting themes of gender equality, youth, anti-corruption, and support for the protection of disenfranchised segments of the population.

11. The United States maintained dialogue with key actors in the labor sector, including union leaders, International Labor Organization officials, industrial park managers, factory owners and government representatives. On several occasions U.S. officials discussed with the Government implementation of Jordan's international commitments to fight child labor and trafficking.

Addendum - Programs Valued at Over \$100,000

12. USAID Democracy and Governance Support Program (\$8,860,000): USAID funded ABA-CEELI, DPK Consulting, RTI and numerous local service providers to support the Government of Jordan's efforts to reform and modernize its justice sector. The goal of USAID's governance portfolio is to support the ongoing efforts of the Ministry of Justice to promote systemic rule of law reform, foster grassroots reform through municipal empowerment, strengthen the capacity of the legislature as a representational body of Jordanian citizens, assist civil society to become a stakeholder in reform, and facilitate the emergence of a free, independent, and professional media.

13. Campaign Against Family Violence (\$500,000): A MEPI-funded program implemented by the American non-governmental organization Freedom House in cooperation with several Jordanian partners. The program seeks to raise the awareness of family violence in Jordan through workshops at universities and local communities.

14. Strengthening the Social Partners Capacity for Promotion of Social Dialogue in Jordan (\$1,390,000): The U.S. Department of Labor funded this multi-year program from November 2001 to October 2004. The project supported the application of the International Labor Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and promoted social dialogue. The project also sought to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Labor to promote and apply core labor standards.

15. National Program for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor in Jordan (\$1,000,000): The U.S. Department of Labor funds this multi-year project to eliminate child labor in Jordan. Project duration is from September 2002 to January 2007 and seeks to strengthen the capacity of key institutions to address child labor issues and to raise awareness about the negative consequences of child labor.

16. International Military Education and Training (IMET) (\$2,500,000): The U.S. Department of Defense funded IMET training in the United States to officers in the Jordanian military. This training exposed students to U.S. judicial and governmental institutions and includes discussions and course modules on respect for human rights.

17. Educating for Democracy in the Muslim World (\$900,000): The U.S. Department of State funded Street Law, Inc. and the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy to develop a

democracy education program targeting civil society in
Jordan, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco.
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